

Natural & Working Lands Working Group March 6, 2020 Meeting Notes

The Working Group members and public attendees introduced themselves. Facilitator Jo D. Saffair summarized the Working Group's process and values and outlined the day's agenda.

Karin Tilberg reported on the Forestry Subgroup's draft strategies. Philip deMaynadier reported on the natural Lands Subgroup's draft strategies. Ellen Griswold reported on the Agriculture Subgroup's draft strategies. [[Draft strategies for each Subgroup are included in the March meeting briefing materials]

Jo D. Saffair asked the Working Group to consider ongoing needs for these Subgroups and other possible organizational groupings for future work. Tom Abello reported that an economic consultant had been hired to assist the Working Groups with cost/benefit analyses for their recommended strategies. Mark Berry and Tom Doak noted the need to have defined targets for carbon mitigation; strategies are scalable and could lack impact if measurable goals are not defined.

The Working Group recessed for additional strategy discussions by the 3 existing Subgroups [see separate Subgroup notes].

Heather Spaulding and Ellen Griswold reported on the Agriculture Subgroup's discussions on research, education, food security, and financial incentives.

Andy Cutko noted the need for agency coordination to address the dramatic increase in solar power generation proposals. Mark Berry reviewed the Natural Lands Subgroup summary list of recommendations. Andy Cutko noted that the Subgroup had not addressed costs yet but was looking at new bold approaches to land conservation.

Tom Doak noted that he has a short document on landowner technical assistance for the Forestry Subgroup. Jo D. Saffair commented that a few members of the Forestry Subgroup had agreed to develop a proposal for a forest carbon program for small landowners.

NEXT STEPS:

Jo D. Saffair commented on the busy meeting schedule for the next month and asked if the existing Subgroups needed more time for their work. Karin Tilberg asked if each Working Group would be limited to 3-5 strategies to present to the Climate Council. Tom Abello responded that there was no specific requirement, but 7-10 strategies might be the maximum. Jo D. Saffair stated that staff would attempt to consolidate the 21 proposed strategies into a single streamlined document.

Jo D. Saffair discussed the goals and document needs for upcoming public stakeholder meetings. Dana Doran and Karin Tilberg suggested providing a summary list of the proposed strategies. Ellen Griswold noted the need for outreach to encourage attendance at the public meetings in the Brunswick and Presque Isle areas. A number of Working Group members volunteered to attend the public meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Theresa Kelly – encouraged the Working Group to be rigorous in applying specific goals for greenhouse gas mitigation to their proposed strategies

Gwen Hilton – keep forests as forests; Somerset County woodlot owners are in economic distress and clearcutting is a way to pay essential bills; look at the carbon impacts of marijuana growing

Ernie Hilton – solar developers are approaching many forest and farmland owners for potential energy projects; landowners may not adequately appreciate the value of the soils under their trees; whitetail deer are damaging trees, which might affect the availability of straight trees for wooden building construction

Doug Bowen – small woodlot owners are struggling and may be desperate enough to allow bad logging practices; 6 million acres in southern Maine are understocked; more wood can be grown on existing forest land

Eliza Townsend – impressed by the consensus of the Working Group thus far; be bold in proposing strategies

NEXT MEETING:

Jo D. Saffair noted that a press release on the 2 public stakeholder meetings would be circulated and that Working Group members should promote attendance at these meetings. She ask Working Group members to suggest resource materials on funding for climate solutions for discussion at the April 3rd meeting.